

## GENERAL NOTES

Conducted by M. H. Swenk

**The White Pelican at Spirit Lake, Iowa.**—A flock of more than 110 White Pelicans (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) spent several days on Little Spirit Lake in April (1929). A large flock was reported here four years ago, also.—F. L. R. AND MARY PRICE ROBERTS, *Spirit Lake, Iowa*.

**Some Notes from South Carolina.**—I saw four adults and two half grown young of the Florida Gallinule (*Gallinula chloropus cachinnans*) on Goose Creek, near Otranto, November 24, 1928. A Duck Hawk (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) was noted flying with a small rodent in its talons along the Cooper River, near the city dump on the east side of Charleston, November 25, 1928. I collected an immature Orange-crowned Warbler (*Vermivora celata celata*) that was molting on the throat, at Otranto, November 24, 1928.—WILLIAM HOWARD BALL, *Washington, D. C.*

**The Lazuli Bunting in Iowa.**—On May 20, 1929, on the edges of a ravine within the limits of Sioux City, Iowa, the writer came upon a male Lazuli Bunting (*Passerina amoena*). The bird was in full breeding plumage and was feeding among the tops of the low second growth trees. It was typical bunting territory, as was evidenced by the presence of several Indigo Buntings (*Passerina cyanea*), which are summer residents in this particular spot. The bunting was carefully studied with 10x glasses and the bright blue, rich buff, and white colorings were seen in the best of light. The writer feels sure of his identification, having previously observed the bird and heard its fine song in the Killdeer Mountain region of North Dakota, where it is a summer resident.—WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH, *Sioux City, Iowa*.

**Black Snakes as Bird Killers.**—While in company with Messrs. Arthur H. Howell and W. H. Ball, I had the unique experience of seeing a common Black Snake in the very act of killing a young Florida Blue Jay.

Professor Howell wished to see a Bald Eagle's nest along the road, and, having stopped the car about five minutes, I heard strange calls by some bird, as if in distress, while the White-eyed Towhees were scolding as if excited about something unusual. I ran over to the spot, which was not more than 100 feet from our car, and came upon a Black Snake wound around the body and neck of a fledgling Florida Blue Jay, which was crying loudly. The snake did not appear to mind me in the least, but was striking viciously, with rapid strokes, raining blows on the head, wings and body of the fledgling.

Wishing the others to witness this atrocity, I called for them to hurry over. They were just in time to see what was taking place, when the reptile sensed danger of interference and glided quickly out of sight. Picking up the bird, we found its head bloody and also a wound upon its wing, and the head was soaked with the saliva, appearing as if the reptile had actually attempted to swallow its prey alive. The bird did not seem to be exhausted, and was very much alive, thanks to our opportune arrival.

The parents did not appear, nor were they heard. Possibly they were off feeding. Perhaps our car frightened them, as these jays in the woods are quite shy, far different from the city birds.—DONALD J. NICHOLSON, *Orlando, Fla.*

**Nesting of the Purple Finch in Arkansas.**—The various papers in the June, 1929, issue of the WILSON BULLETIN, on the erratic nesting habits of the Pine

Siskin (*Spinus pinus*), prompt me to report a strange case of the nesting of the Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus purpureus*), here during the summer of 1920.

On June 25, 1920, two boys came to me, telling of the nesting of some "red sparrows" in the Red Cedar trees (*Juniperus virginiana*) in their front yard. I, of course, went with them, and found their report to be true, there being four nests of the Purple Finch in the trees, three in one and the fourth in another near by, all four nests containing four eggs each, and all being placed from ten to sixteen feet high, some eighteen to thirty inches from the tree trunk, on the smaller limbs. They successfully raised the first brood, in spite of the many visitors coming to see these strange "sparrows," which may be the reason they vanished as soon as the young birds were old enough to fly well.

The nests, which are before me at this time, are very similar to those of the Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella passerina passerina*), only more frail than the usual Chippy's nest.

Locally the Red Cedars, as well as all other evergreens, are not native, and these birds are only rarely seen here, although during the past winter, and occasionally on other winter days, they appeared here in great numbers. As far as I can learn this is the only record of the bird nesting this far south, and it is the only time that they have remained here during the breeding season. The latest date at which they have ever been recorded here, with the exception of the 1920 season, was this year, when a large number of these birds were observed feeding on buds of various trees on the 14th of April.—J. D. BLACK, Winslow, Ark.

**The Holboell's Grebe in Iowa in June.**—As there apparently is only one very late spring record of the occurrence of the Holboell's Grebe (*Colymbus holboelli*) in Iowa (Fenton, WILSON BULLETIN, XXVIII, 1916, p. 131), and that one, May 26, 1916, evidently doubted by Ira N. Gabrielson (WILSON BULLETIN, XXIX, 1917, p. 97), I would like to record two recent observations of this species in central Iowa in June.

On June 6, 1928, Messrs. Arthur T. Watson and Kenneth Nelson of Des Moines, and the writer saw a pair of "large Grebes" at Long Pond, seven miles west of Perry, Dallas County. As the three of us are all familiar with this species in life, having seen it many times on the Atlantic Coast in winter, we recognized these birds immediately as Holboell's Grebes. After circling the pond to gain better light, we discovered that the first pair had joined with four others, and the six birds continued to swim and dive repeatedly within range of our glasses.

We were at a loss for an explanation of this late migration of a species classed by R. M. Anderson (Birds of Iowa, 1907) as "very rare in Iowa." One year later to the day, on June 6, 1929, the same observers found a single fully plumaged male of this species on Brenton's Slough, four miles west of Camp Dodge, Polk County. Do not these observations establish the Holboell's Grebe as a casual late spring migrant through Iowa?

Details of the field characteristics of the bird at this time of year may be of interest. The rufous throat patch is quite conspicuous and contrasts sharply with the white of the belly, especially when seen in flight. While the bird is at rest on the water, the long neck, the long pointed bill which is of a lighter shade than that of a loon, and the white of the upper throat and cheeks sharply cut by the black crown, can be seen plainly. The white on the secondaries is noticeable